

For me, Tao is an aspect of life not merely Chinese, but human, which is the great mark of Chinese life. It is a phase of humanity which works for salvation, by creation and by resignation,—by self-immersion in the world-process. It is a perpetual redirection of energy, one of the world's everlasting fountains of encouragement and revaluation of familiar things,—an organon by which the mortality of such things is transcended.

From long residence among a Buddhist people I know what tenderness is added to strength by the suppression of self-assertion, a suppression which is a step towards Nirvana. With this knowledge I see more, much more, in Tao than the merely negative. The senses, it has been said, are to the Taoist doors leading out into the Universe. A Chinese poem of seventeen centuries ago says:

My joy is as though I possessed a Kingdom  
I lose my hair and I go singing;  
To the four frontiers men join in my refrain.

And Japanese poetry is one long chain of witness to the rushing forth of the soul to "mingle with the colour and tones of the Universe."

And the teaching of Lao Tzu has had a profound influence upon Japanese character. All Japanese students are grounded in the teaching of the men they call Rôshi, Kôshi and Môshi, that is Lao Tzu, Confucius and Mencius—and over and over again, as I read the Tao Teh King, I am struck by sentences which seem brilliant condensations in words of ordinary phases of life in Japan,—such thing as these:—

1. To know, but to be as not knowing, is the height of wisdom.
2. To the good I would be good; to the not good I would also be good, in order to make them good.
3. He who knows how to shut needs no bolts—yet you cannot open.
4. When warriors join in battle, he who has pity conquers.
5. Those whom Heaven would save it fences round with gentleness.
6. I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize,—gentleness, frugality and humility.
7. Temper your sharpness, disentangle your ideas, moderate your brilliance, and live in harmony with your age.
8. He who has been the means of the death of many people should mourn over them with bitter tears.
9. Tao gives to all good men without distinction.
10. The further one goes away the less he knows.
11. One may be transparent on all sides and yet be unknown.
12. Silent teaching, passive usefulness,—few in the world attain to this.

Here are a dozen pearls which are surely unsurpassed in our Western literature of morals. Everyone of them I have found embedded in Japanese life and character, not here and there, but as a matter of daily occurrence. Some of these ideals are, of course, often only suggested from afar or expressed by people who love to pose. But all of them are integral parts of the ethic or the faith of Japan, and every one of them brings back to me the memory of definite individuals. I remember, for instance, the naval commander with whom